# **PSEVEN** EARL DERR BIGGERS

CHAPTER XV.

Wee In Number Seven.

had "got to him" after all. He felt his heart sink. Who? He thought of the smooth, crafty mountain of a ness she could not conceat. ago. Who but Cargan and Max. of found-his old friends of the mouncourse? They had found his childish tain. hiding place, and the money had come

do it again. How? When? He did to give it to you" blind alley, and he knew it.

He unlocked the door of No. 7. To go downstairs, to meet the sweet eager- lieve, but I'm telling the truth. I went ness of the girl who depended on him. to confess himself tricked-it took nil the courage he had. Why had it all happened anyhow? Confound it! Had he not come up here to be alone with his thoughts? But strighter side, it had given him her, or it would give him her before the last card was played. He shut his teeth tightly and went down the stairs.

Mr. Bland had added himself to the group about the fire. Quickly the eyes of Miss Norton met Magee's. She was trembling with excitement. Cargan. huge, red, cheery, got in Magee's path

"I'll annihilate this man," thought Magee.

"I've been figuring," said the mayor, "that was one thing he didn't have to contend with. No. sir, there wasn't any bright young men hunting up old. Napoleon and knocking him in the monthly magazines. They didn't go down to Sardinia and pump it out of the neighbors that he started business on borrowed money and that his father drank more than was good for him. They didn't run illustrated articles about the diamonds he were and moving pictures of him eating soup.

"No. I guess not." replied Mages abstructedly. "I reckon there was a lot in his rec-

ord wasn't meant for the newspapers,' continued Cargan reflectively. it didn't get there. Nap was lucky. He had it on the reformers there. They couldn't squash him with the the money-under a brick of my firenower of the press."

Mr. Magee broke away from the mayor's rehashed bistory and burried to Miss Norton.

"You promised vesterday." he reminded her. "to show me the pictures and they found the money. They're sight of those feminine beights Billy of the admiral."

"So I did," she replied, rising quickly. "To think you have spent all this time in Baldpate inn and not paid indeed. Billy Magee saw that she was to the superb Helen Faulkner. He banging around for the concert-there homage to its own particular cock of the walk.

She led him to a portrait hanging beside the desk.

"Behold," she said, "the admiral on a sunny day in July. Note the starchy grandeur of him, even with the therof the things the rocking chair fleet flurry at the approach of all that superiority? Theodore Roosevelt, Wil-Ham Faversham and Richard Harding Davis all arriving together couldn't overshadow the admiral for a minute."

Mr. Magee gazed at the picture of a pompous little man whose fierce mustache seemed anxious to make up for the lack of lair on his head.

"A bald here at a summer resort," he commented, "it seems incredible." "Oh, they think he lost his hair fighting for the flag!" she laughed.

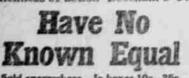
"Is is possible to see the room where the admiral plays his famous game?" "Step softly," she answered. "In here. There stands the very table."

#### To Restore Good Health

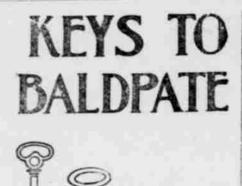
The first thing to do is to correct the minor ailments caused by defective or irregular action of the organs of digestion and elimination. After these organs have been put in good working order by timely use of

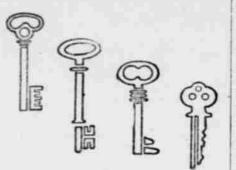
## BEECHAM'S

(The Largest Sale of Any Medicino in the World) better digestion results, and then the food really nourishes and strengthens the body. The first dose gives relief and sounder sleep, quieter nerves, and improved action of all the bodily organs are caused by an occasional use of Beecham's Pills. They give universal satisfaction and in safety, sureness and quickness of action Beecham's Pills



box are very yaluable,





They went into the small card foom Int the right of the entrance to the office, and Mr. Magee quietly closed the IS rage blazed forth. So they door behind them. The time had come.

"Well?" said the girl, with an eager-

man who had detained him a moment | Mr. Magee groped for words and

"I love you," he cried desperately. home to their eager hands. No doubt "You must believe I want to help you. they were laughing slyly at him now. It looks rather the other way now, I'll Well, he would show them yet. He admit. I want you to have that mongot up and walked the floor. Once he ey. I don't know who you are nor had held them up in the snow and what this all means out I want you to spoiled their little game. He would have it. I went upstairs determined

not know. His soul cried for action | "Really." The word was at least 50 of some sort, but he was up against a degrees below the temperature of the

> cardroom. "Yes, really. I won't ask you to be-



BROOK "I love you!" he cried desperately.

to the place where I had fatuously hid sadly. o. It was cone

"How terribly unfortunate."

She-taking a calm view of it? No. grip and climb. Witness his attentions that beautiful women were even more who ascribed to him the virtues of a

ed, had he fallen into that error? through her teeth, "with any further now, mometer up in the clouds. That's one recital of what you 'are going' to do. You seem to have a fatal facility in ed the girl slowly. adores in him. Can you imagine the that line. Your record of accomplish-Even after last night, I believed."

done me an injustice. I'm going"-

"One thing," said she, smiling a smile that could have cut glass, "you was cool, are going to do. I know that you won't fall this time, because I shall "But as a matter of fact I seem to be personally see you through with it of very little service to any one. Just off the beaten path, you know, and all You're going to stop making a fool of now I would give a great deal to have

me who you are-what this is all helping you, you will readily see that about. Can't you see I'm working in I must not listen. I'm sorry. the dark? You must"-

She threw open the card room door. "An English officer," she remarked Now I must-go forward-alone." She loudly, stepping out into the other smiled unhappily. room, "taught the admiral the gameat least, so be said. It added so much romance to it in the eyes of the rocking chair fleet. Can't you see-Indiathe hot sun-the Kipling local color-a silent, tanned, handsome man eternally playing solltaire on the porch of the barracks? Has the barracks a porch? Roused, humiliated, baffled, Mr. Ma-

gee felt his cheeks burn. "We shall see what we shall see," he muttered.

"Why coin the inevitable into a

bromide?" she nsked. Mr. Magee joined the group by the fire. Never before in his life had he

been so determined on anything as he was now that the package of money should return to his keeping. But how? How trace through this maze of humans the present holder of that precious bundle of collateral? He looked at Mr. Max, sneering his lemon colored sneer at the mayor's side; at the mayor himself, nonchalant as the admiral being photographed; at fire, and Mr. Magee rose hastily to Bland, author of the Arabella fiction, follow. He stood close behind her, sprawling at ease before the fire; at gazing down at her golden hair, shimthe tawdry Mrs. Norton and at Myra mering in the dark. Thornfell, who had by her pleading the night before made him ridiculous. Hightly, "what an absolutely ridiculous Who of these had the money now? Who but Cargun and Max, their faces serene, their eyes eagerly on the press and getting nowhere at all. Listen-Bo arutions for lunch, their plans for leaving Baldpate inn no doubt already | there's hope. Am I not to have one

made?

And then Mr. Magee saw coming down the stairs another figure-one he had forgot-Professor Thaddeus Boiton, he of the mysterious dialogue by the annex door. On the professor's forehead was a surprising red scratch, and his eyes, no longer hidden by the double convex lenses, stood revenled a

vashed out gray in the light of noon. "A most unfortunate accident," ex plained the old man. "Most distressing. I have broken my glasses. I am almost blind without them."

"How'd it happen, Doc?" asked Mr. Cargan easily.

"I came into unexpected juxtaposition with an open door," returned Professor Bolton. "Stupid of me, but I'm always doing it. Really, the agility displayed by doors in getting in my path is surprising."

"You and Mr. Max can sympathize with each other," said Magec. "I thought for a moment your injuries might have been received in the same cause."

"Don't worry, Doc," Mr. Bland soothed him, "we'll all keep a weather eye | He stooped to her. out for reporters that want to connect you up with the peroxide blonds."

The professor turned his ineffectual gaze on the haberdasher, and there was a startlingly fronic smile on his "I know, Mr. Bland," he said, "that

my safety is your dearest wish." It was past 3 o'clock. The early twilight crept up the mountain, and the shadows began to lengthen in the great bare office of Baldpate inn. In the red flicker of firelight Mr. Magee sat and pondered. The interval since luncheon had passed lazily. He was no nearer to guessing which of Baldpate inn's winter guests hugged close the precious package. Exasperated, angry, he waited for he knew not what, restless all the while to act, but having not the glimmer of an inspira-

tion as to what his course ought to be. He heard the rustle of skirts on the stair landing and looked up. Down the broad stairway, so well designed to serve as a show window for the sartorial triumphs of Baldpate's gay summer people, came the tall handsome girl who had the night before set all his plans awry.

Now, for the first time he looked upon her as a flesh and blood girl, noted the red in her olive cheeks, the fire in her dark eyes and realized that her interest in that package of money might be something more than another queer quirk in the tangle of events. She smiled a friendly smile at Ma-

gee and took the chair he offered. "Last night, Mr. Magee," she said, "I told you frankly why I had come to Baldpate inn. You were good enough to say that you would belp me if you could. The time has come when you

can, I think." "Yes?" answered Magee. His beart sank. What now?

"I must confess that I spied this morning," she went on. "It was rude of me, perhaps. But I think almost anything is excusable under the circumstances, don't you? I witnessed a know who has the \$200,000?"

"You know?" cried Magee. His heart gave a great bound. At last! And then-he stopped. "I'm afraid I must ask you not to tell me," he added

She was of a type common in Magee's world-delicate, finely reared, sensi-"Yes, isn't it?" Mr. Magee rejoiced tive. True, in her pride and haughtithat she took so calm a view of it, ness she suggested the snow capped "They searched the room, of course, heights of the eternal hills. But at Magee had always been one to seize He stopped, for he had seen her face. his alpenstock in a more determined

furiously, wildly angry. He remem- had a moment of faltering. Here was bered always having written it down a girl who at least did not doubt him. beautiful in anger. How, he wonder gentleman, who was glad to trust in off by any fairy story like that," said him. Should be transfer his allegi- the mayor of Reuton, "you're a child "Please do not bore me." she said since? No, he could hardly do that

"You ask me not to tell you," repeat-"That demands an explanation." rement is pathetically weak. And-oh, plied Billy Magee. "I want you to

what a fool I've been! I believed, understand-to be certain that I would delight to help you if I could. But the "I know," he said helplessly, "you're fact is that before you came I gave terribly disappointed, and I don't blame my word to secure the package you But you will find out that you've speak of for-another woman. I cannot break my promise to her.' "I see," she answered. Her tone

"I'm very sorry," Magee went on. the information you were about to "Tell me," pleaded Billy Magee, "tell give me. But since I could not use it

> "I'm sorry, too," replied the girl. "Thank you very much-for telling me.

> "I'm afraid you must," answered Bil-

ly Magee.

On the stairs appeared the slim figure of the other girl. Her great eyes were wistful, her face was pale. She came toward them through the red firelight. Mr. Magee saw what a fool be had been to waver in his allegiance wanted her, sufely. The snow capped companionable is the brook that sparkles in the valley.

"It's rather dull, isn't it?" asked Miss Norton of the Thornhill girl. By the side of the taller woman she seemed slight, almost childish. "Have you seen the pictures of the admiral, Miss Thornhill? Looking at them is our one diversion.

"I do not care to see them, thank you." Myra Thornfill replied, moving toward the stairs. "He is a very dear friend of my father." She passed up and out of sight.

Miss Norton turned away from the

"I've just been thinking." he said figure I must be in your eyes, buzzing round and round like a bee in a bottle one has left the inn. While they stay more chance-a chance to prove to you how much I care?" She turned, and even in the dusk he

saw that her eyes were wet. "Ob, I don't know, I don't know," she whispered. "I'm not angry any more. I'm just at sea. I don't know what to think-what to do. Why try any longer? I think I'll go away-and

"You mustn't do that," urged Magee. They came back into the firelight. What right has Hayden on his side? "Miss Thornhill has just informed me that she knows who has the package!" "Indeed," said the girl calmly, but her face bad flushed.

"I didn't let her tell me, of course." "Why not?" Oh, how maddening women could be!

"Why not?" Magee's tone was burt. Because I couldn't use her information in getting the money for you." "You are still 'going to' get the

money for me?" The firelight fell on her lips, ber bair, her eyes, and Mr. Magee knew that his selfish bachelorhood was at an end

"Give me, please," he said, "the benefit of the doubt." It was a poor speech compared to what was in his heart, but Billy Magee was rapidly learning that most of the pretty speeches went with puppets who could not feel.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Exquisite Mr. Hayden. MAND and May came in from a brisk walk on the veranda. The mayor of Reuton, who had been dozing near the desk.

Miss Norton rose and ascended the stairs. Still the protesting Magee was at her heels. At the head of the stairs she turned.

"You shall have your final chance," she said. "The mayor, Max and Bland are alone in the office. I don't approve of eavesdropping at Baldpate in the summer. It has spoiled a lot of per fectly adorable engagements. But in winter it's different. Whether you really want to help me or not. I'm sure I don't know, but if you do the conversation below now might prove of interest." "I'm sure it would," Magee agreed.

"Well, I have a scheme. Listen. Baldpate inn is located in a temper ance county. That doesn't mean that people don't drink here. It simply means that there's a lot of mystery and romance connected with the drinking. Sometimes those who follow the god of chance in the card room late at night grow thirsty. Now, it happens that there is a trapdoor in the floor of the card room, up which drinks are frequently passed from the cellar. Isn't that exciting? A hotel clerk who became human once in my presence told me all about it. If you went into the cellar and hunted about you might find that door and climb up into the eard room.'

"A bully idea," agreed Mr. Magee. "I'll hurry down there this minute. I'm more grateful than you can guess scene in the hall above-Mr. Magee, 1 for this chance. And this time-but you'll see."

Magee hurried to the cellar and with the aid of a box of matches found a ladder leading to a door cut in the floor above. He climbed through dust and cobwebs, unfastened the catch The girl looked at him in wonder, and pushed cautiously upward. In anchill little card room. Softly be opened the card room door about half an inch and put his ear to it.

The three men were grouped very close at hand, and he heard Mr. Bland spenking in low tones:

"I'm talking to you boys as a friend. The show is over. There ain't no use won't be none. Go home and get some clean collars and a square meal." "If you think I'm going to be shook

with all a child's touching faith." "All right," replied Mr. Bland. "I thought I'd pass you the tip, that's all. It ain't nothing to me what you do. But it's all over, and you've lost out I'm sorry you have, but I take Hay-

den's orders." "Dash Hayden!" snarled the mayor. It was his idea to make a three act play out of this thing. He's responsible for this silly trip to Baldpate. This audience we've been acting for-he let us in for them."

"I know," said Bland, "But you can't deny that Baldpate inn looked like the ideal spot at first-secluded.

"Yes," sneered the mayor, "as secluded as a Sunday school the Sunday before Christmas."

"Well, who could have guessed it?" went on Mr. Bland. "As I say, I don't care what you do. I just passed you the tip. I've got that nice little package of the long green. I've got it

where you'll never find it." "How did you get hold of it?" inquired Mr. Lou Max.

"I had my eye on this little professor person," explained Mr. Bland, "This morning when Magee went up the mountain I trailed the highbrow to Magee's room. When I busted in. unannounced by the butler, he was even for a moment, for he loved her. making his getaway. I don't like to talk about what followed. He's an heights are inspiring, but far more old man, and I sure didn't mean to break his glasses nor scratch his dome of thought. There's ideas in that dome go back to the time of Anthony J. Chaucer. But-he's always talking about that literature chair of hiswhy couldn't he stay at home and sit in it? Anyhow, I got the bundle all right, all right. I wonder what the little fossil wants with it."

"The Doc's glasses was broke," said Max, evidently to the mayor of Ren-

"Um-m." came Cargan's voice "Bland, how much do you make working for this nice, kind gentleman, Mr. Hayden?"

thousand a year from Hayden. Twen-

ty thousand in two seconds if you hand

"Oh, about \$2,000 a year, with picknot! Show me where it is." ings," replied Bland. "Yes?" went on Mr. Cargan. "1 ain't no Charles Dana Gibson with words. My talk's a little rough and sketchy, I guess. But here's the outline, plain as I can make it. Two

that package to me.

honest-after a fashion. I can't quite stand for that. I'm working for Hay-

"Don't be a fool," sneered Max. "Of course," said the mayor, "I appreciate your scruples, having had a few in my day myself; though you'd never think so to read the Star. But look at it sensible. The money belongs to sie. If you was to hand it over you'd be just doing plain justice. I did what was agreed. Do I get my pay?"

"No." said Bland, but his tone was less firm. "I can't go back on Hayden. No-it wouldn't"-

"Twenty thousand," repeated Cargan. "Ten years' salary the way you are going ahead at present. What's Hayden ever done for you? He'll throw you down some day, the way he's thrown me. "I-I-don't know"- wavered Bland.

"You get the package," suggested the mayor; "take \$20,000 out and slip the rest to me. No questions asked." "Well"- began Bland. He was lost. Suddenly the quiet of Baldpate moun-

tain was assailed by a loud pounding at the inn door and a voice crying. "Bland-let me in!" "There's Hayden now!" cried Mr.

Bland. "It, ain't too late," came the mayor's voice. "You can do it yet. It ain't too late."

"Do what?" cried Bland in a firm tone. "You can't bribe me, Cargan." He raised his voice. "Go round to the east door, Mr. Hayden." Then he added to Cargan: "That's my answer. I'm going to let him in." "Let him in." bellowed the mayor.

Let the hound in. I guess I've got something to say to Mr. Hayden." There came to Magee's ears the

sound of opening doors and of returning footsteps. "How do you do, Cargan?" said a

voice new to Baldpate. "Cut the society howdydoes," replied the mayor hotly. "There's a little score to be settled between me and you. Hayden. I ain't quite wise to your orchid in the buttonhole ways. 1 don't understand your system. When I give my word I keep it. Has that gone out of style up on the avenue where you live?"

"There are conditions"- began Hay-

"The b- there are!" roared Cargan. 'A man's word's his word, and he keeps it to me or I know the reason You can't come down to the city hall with any new deal like this. was to have two hundred thousand Why didn't I get it?"

"Because," replied Hayden smoothly, "the-er-little favor you were to grant me in return is to be made use-

less by the courts." "Can I help that?" the mayor de-



"I did my work. I want my pay." that in the agreement? I did my work. I want my pay. I'll have it, Mr. Hay-

Hayden's voice was cool and even as

he spoke to Bland. "Got the money. Joe?"

"Yes," Bland answered.

"Where? "Well, we'd better wait, hadn't we?" Bland's voice was shaky.

swered Hayden. "I want to see you do it!" cried Cargan. "If you think I've come up here on a pleasure trip I got a chart and a pointer all ready for your next

"No. We'll take it and get out," an

lesson. And let me put you wise. This nobby little idea of yours about Baldpate inn is the worst ever. The place is as full of people as if the regalar summer rates was being charged. "The devil it is!" cried Hayden. His roice betrayed a startled annoyance. "It basn't worried me none," went

on the mayor. "They can't touch me. I own the prosecutor, and you know it. But it ain't going to do you any good on the avenue if you're seen bere with me, is it, Mr. Hayden?" "The mors reason," replied Hayden,

"for getting the money and leaving at once. I'm not afraid of you, Cargan. I'm armed." "I ain't," sneered the mayor. "But

no exquisite from your set with his little air gun ever scared me. You try to get away from here with that bundle and you'll find yourself all tangled up in the worst scrap that ever happened. "Where's the money, Joe?" asked

Hayden. "You won't wait"- Bland begged.

"Wait to get my own money-I guess

"Remember," put in Cargan, "that money's mine. And don't have any pipe dreams about the law-the law ain't called into things of this sort, as rule. I guess you'd be the last to call it. You'll never get away from here with my money.

Mr. Magee opened the card room "No," objected Bland. "I've been door farther and saw the figure of the

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stranger. Hayden, confronting the I looked up"mayor. Mr. Cargan's title of exquisite best described him. The newcomer was tall, fair, fastidious in dress and manner. A revolver gleam-

ed in his hand. "Joe," he said firmly, "take me to

that money at once." "It's out here," replied Bland. He and Hayden disappeared through the dining room door into the darkness. a learned sort of jelly if I'd wanted Cargan and Max followed close be- to, but I'm a great admirer of Mr.

air. He must be in the midst of it. Perhaps again in a three cornered it, Mr. Magee. I made no outry or fight it would be the third party that resistance when he took it. 'I'm just would emerge victorious. In the darkness of the dining room

mountain. "I got to talk to you, Mr. Magee," he whispered in a frightened tremolo. "I

got to have a word with you this minute. "Not now!" cried Magee, pushing

him aside. "Later." The hermit wildly seized his arm, "No, now." be said. "There's strange goings on here, Mr. Magee. I got something to tell you-about a package of money I found in the kitchen." Mr. Magee stood very still. Beside him in the darkness he heard the her-

mit's excited breathing. Undecided, Mr. Magee looked toward the kitchen door, from behind which came the sound of men's voices. The Four shadowy figures tramped in hermit of Baldpate fairly trembled through the dining room door.

"Since I broke in on you yesterday morning." he said in a low tone, "one thing has followed another so fast that

I'm a little dazed." "You have nothing on me there. Peters." Magee answered. "Well," went on the hermit, "as I my neck so I could not turn my head say, through all this downpour of peo- and all through my body. I tried

I'm working for you.

That's why I feel I ought to give what information I got to you." Mr. Magee agreed impatiently. "Where you find women," Peters continued, "there you find things be-

one idea.

yond understanding. History"-"Get to the point." "Well, yes. This afternoon I was hunting around in the big refrigerator with a candle, thinking maybe some little token of food had been left over from last summer's rush-something in a can that time cannot wither nor custom stale, as the poet says-and

away up on the top shelf, in the dark-

est corner, I found a little package.

"There was money in that package lots of it; enough to found a university or buy a woman's gowns for a when a shadow came in the doorway.

'Who?" asked Magee breathlessly. "That little, blinky eyed, Professor Bolton was standing there, most owlish and interested. He came into the refrigerator. That package you have in your hand, Peters,' he says, 'belongs to me. I put it in cold storage so it would keep. I'll take it now.' Well Mr. Magee, I'm a peaceful man, I could have battered that professor into Carnegie on account of the library, and Hot with excitement, Mr. Magee I go in for peace. I knew it wasn't

slipped from his place of concealment. exactly the thing, but"-A battle fit for the gods was in the "You gave him the package?" "That's hardly the way I would put a cook,' I says, 'in this house. I ain't he bumped into a limp, clinging figure. tains its fortunes like a safety deposit It proved to be the hermit of Baldpate vault.' So I let go the bundle. It was weak of me, I know, but I sort of got the habit of giving up money,

being married so many years." "Peters," said Mr. Magee, "I'm sorry your grip was so insecure, but I'm mighty glad you came to me with this

matter. "He told me I wasn't to mention it to anybody," replied the hermit, "but as I say, I sort of look on it that we were here first, and if our guests get to chasing untold wealth up and down the place, we ought to let each other in on it."

"Correct," answered Magee, "You are a valuable man, Peters. I want you to know that I appreciate the way you have acted in this affair."

(To Be Continued Next Wedneslay.)

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